

Message Text

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14

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 080815Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3968

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 2314

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KN, KS, US

SUBJ: ZAMBIA REACTION TO PANMUNJON INCIDENT AUGUST 19

REF: (A) STATE 211862, (B) LUSAKA 2223

1. THERE WAS LITTLE OFFICIAL OR PRIVATE REACTION TO THE AUGUST 19 SLAYING OF TWO US ARMY OFFICERS IN THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE. THE LARGER QUESTION OF KOREA HAS BEEN A SUBJECT OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE GRZ (REFTEL B). HOWEVER, THE AUGUST 19 INCIDENT HAS NOT BEEN ALLUDED TO BY GRZ OFFICIALS IN THEIR CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS, NOR HAVE NON-OFFICIAL ZAMBIANS INDICATED ANY CONCERN, OR PREOCCUPATION WITH THE EVENT.

2. LOCAL PRESS PLAY, WHICH COMMENCED AUGUST 20, WAS RELEGATED TO THE INSIDE PAGES DEALING WITH NEWS FROM ABROAD. COVERAGE WAS REPLAY OF WIRE REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON AND SEOUL ABOUT ESCALATING MILITARY TENSIONS ON THE PENINSULA AND THE INCREASED STATE OF READINESS ON BOTH SIDES FOLLOWING THE KILLINGS. NEITHER ZAMBIAN PAPER HAS MADE ANY EDITORIAL COMMENT. PRESS COVERAGE CONTINUED FOR ABOUT FIVE DAYS AND THEN TAILED OFF.

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3. HOWEVER, ZAMBIAN TV ON ITS EVENING NEWSCASTS WEDNESDAY, SEPT 1, SHOWED A FILM CLIP OF THE MOVIES OF THE INCIDENT TAKEN FROM THE SOUTH KOREAN SIDE OF THE DMZ. UNFORTUNATELY, TECHNICALLY THE FILM CLIP WAS OF RELATIVELY POOR QUALITY AND THE ACCOMPANYING NARRATIVE NOT INFORMATIVE REGARDING BACKGROUND AND DETAILS OF INCIDENT. ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED DAILY MAIL DEVOTED A FULL PAGE TO THE NORTH KOREAN AUGUST 5 STATEMENT ACCUSING US OF PROVOCATIVE MOVES. THIS WAS SUPPLIED AND PAID FOR BY THE KOREAN CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY.

4. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THE AUGUST 19 INCIDENT IS HAVING LITTLE OR NO IMPACT ON ZAMBIAN OFFICIAL OR PRIVATE THINKING REGARDING KOREA. TREATMENT OF THE INCIDENT IN THE MEDIA DID NOT INDICATE THAT THE GRZ WAS ATTEMPTING TO INFLUENCE LOCAL OPINION IN ONE DIRECTION OR THE OTHER. GRZ POSITION ON LARGER KOREAN QUESTION IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO BE GUIDED BY ADHERENCE TO ZAMBIAN INTERPRETATION OF MORAL PRINCIPLE AS REPORTED IN REFTEL B. LOW

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